

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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January 28, 2014

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson,

I write you today regarding the Las Vegas urban area Relative Risk Profile issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). I appreciate your attention to this matter.

As you know, Congress passed the "9/11 Act" (Public Law 110-53) in 2007, which authorized the UASI grant for our nation's urban areas that are at high-risk of terror threats. This legislation granted the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary the discretion to develop a risk formula for choosing which cities to award and for determining how much of the funding from UASI each city would receive.

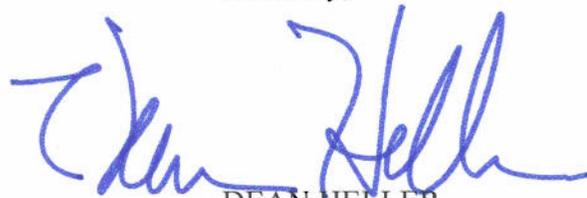
In assessing each urban area, FEMA generated a strong formula, with guidance from Congress, for each city's Risk Profile based on threat, vulnerability, and consequence of a terror attack. However, in reviewing this Relative Risk Profile, I believe the formula utilized does not properly account for two concerns that may unfairly disadvantage the Las Vegas/Paradise Metropolitan Statistical Area. Those issues include border crossings and the average number of days a visitor stays in Las Vegas.

First, the Risk Profile takes into consideration the annual number of border crossings at land ports of entry into the U.S. However, this fails to account for border crossings at all ports of entry, including air ports. Las Vegas is home to a major international terminal at McCarran International Airport, which—according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection—processed over 736,936 foreign visitors in 2012 and has had the number of foreign travelers coming through U.S. Customs almost double since 2009. These data points underscore the need to consider all ports of entry, which has a serious impact on Las Vegas' vulnerability.

Second, the Risk Profile considers the average number of visitors as a part of the Consequence Component, but this only takes into account the average number of visitors on a given day who are staying for up to three days. According to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA), over the past five years, visitors have stayed for 4.5 days on average. To accurately account for visitor data and the consequence of a terror attack on Las Vegas, I urge FEMA to consider the full 4.5 days that visitors stay in Las Vegas as part of its calculation.

I respectfully request that these data points be updated in the Fiscal Year 2014 Risk Profile to ensure that the needs of and threats to the Las Vegas/Paradise Metropolitan Statistical Area are accurately depicted. I look forward to your response to my inquiry by February 4, 2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dean Heller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dean" and the last name "Heller" clearly distinguishable.

DEAN HELLER  
U.S. Senator